

An

Inaugural Dissertation

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W. E. H.

The Faculty of

Dean

The University of Pennsylvania

For the Degree of

Doctor of Medicine

By

Alexander B. Crallé of Virginia.

Respectfully,
J. H. H. H.

Doctor of Medicine

for the purpose of

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On Gascolis.

The vast importance of the stomach in the animal economy, in which perhaps it occupies the highest rank; located as it is in the centre of our system, and the intimate and multiplied relations existing between it and the rest of the system, render it incident to a great variety of diseases, exceedingly interesting and important. But it is to that particular disease termed gastritis by the Nosologists to which I shall confine my observations.

This disease belongs to the Class Pyrexiae and order Phlogmasiae of Dr. Cullen, and is divided by that author into two kinds, the Phlegmonous and Erythematic, according as one or the other of the coats of that organ is the seat of the disease; the first being seated in the mucous coat of that organ, or the peritonium investing it.

the subject

The most important of the elements in the
general economy, in which the life of man
and the life of the state are so closely
interwoven, is the system of the market and
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The second always in the villous coat, and cellular texture immediately subjacent. But this last seems to be a peculiar action of the stomach and frequently if not generally, accompanies the last stage of Malignant fever. We shall therefore pass on to the consideration of the more active inflammation of that organ.

The symptoms by which inflammation of the stomach may be denoted, I shall endeavour to enumerate, but before doing so it may be necessary perhaps to say something concerning its Causes.

They appear to be all those which produce inflammation in general; though more particularly by exposure to cold; by taking cold drink into the stomach when the body is much heated by exercise; or by swallowing Stimulant, acid, or poisonous articles; it is sometimes produced by indigestion, from having taken in a large

quantity of food of difficult digestion. It may also be excited by external violence, as blows, or falls, and it is said to be sometimes the consequence of repelled or misplaced gout, or the reception of eruptive diseases from the surface to the stomach.

Symptoms.

The symptoms of gastritis, are an acute pain in some part of the region of the stomach; soreness to the touch, attended with fever, and frequent vomiting; especially when any thing is taken in the stomach; and in the more advanced stages tension about the epigastric and umbilical regions. The pulse even from the commencement is small, but frequent, quick, hard and corded; The patient's strength being in a greater degree of prostration, than in any other of the Phlegmasiae. The disease runs on with great rapidity, and if not timely arrested is attended

by an aggravation of all the preceding symptoms, particularly those of debility. In this stage syncope frequently comes on; the extremities are cold; the surface cold and moist; languid countenance; feeble and almost imperceptible pulse; hiccup with occasional vomiting of a dark matter; a flatulent distention of the abdomen, and frequently low delirium.

These are generally the precursors of gangrene, and in some instances indicate its actual existence.

Such as I have mentioned are the ordinary symptoms which belong to gastritis; but there are a great variety of anomalous affections which sometimes attend this disease. A singular instance of this fact, was related by Dr. Chapman in his lecture on this disease, in which the most remarkable circumstance attending the case was a violent inflammation and pain in the

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great toe resembling podagra. He also observed that Dr. Physic had met with instances of a similar nature. Paralysis is also not a very unfrequent incident in inflammation of the stomach; an intolerance of light, and an aversion to drink also sometimes attend the disease.

From the sensibility of the stomach and the sympathy existing between it and the rest of the system, it is obvious that an inflammation of this organ may terminate fatally, without running the common course of inflammation particularly by the great degree of debility, which such an inflammation suddenly produces.

When it continues long enough to follow the ordinary course of other inflammations, it may terminate by resolution, gangrene, or suppuration. It seldom terminates in scirrhus as it is said to do, by some Nosologists.



When this disease arises from no violent cause and is attended by a moderate state of the symptoms, and with a gradual remission of these, especially when the proper remedies have been employed in the first week; the disease is said to admit of resolution.

When the symptoms continue in a moderate degree for more than one or two weeks, and is attended also by a considerable remission of pain, while a sensation of heaviness and anxiety still remain, the disease is said to have a tendency to terminate by suppuration.

When an abscess has formed, the frequency of the pulse is at first somewhat abated, but soon after it is again increased, with frequent cold shiverings, and with marked exacerbations in the evening, followed by profuse night sweats, and other symptoms of hectic fever. These after a while prove fatal.



slip the astringent into the cavity of the stomach, the pus being evacuated by vomiting, and the ulcer soon heal.

When the symptoms continue violent, not yielding to the remedies employed during the first days of the disease, it may be said to have a tendency to gangrene. And the existence of gangrene may be suspected, when there is a sudden remission of pain, while the frequency of the pulse continues, and at the same time becomes weaker, accompanied by other marks of an increasing debility in the whole system.

Treatment

The leading indications of cure in this disease are very obvious. We have a violent inflammation situated in the most delicate organ, and distinguished by a rapidity of progress not often witnessed in the inflammation of other



organs. It is therefore necessary to apply the most efficient remedies in the early stage of the disease. Venesection is admitted by all to stand first on the list of our remedies. Totally regardless of the state of pulse, or the apparent prostration of strength, it is our duty to bleed frequently and copiously; for such is the rapid progress of this disease, that a few hours delay makes a most material difference in the issue. As to the quantity of blood to be drawn, there is no established rule; but if the patient be an adult of a tolerably robust constitution it will be proper to take from twenty to thirty ounces at once from the arm. And it will sometimes be necessary to repeat it, the same day. As we deplete, the pulse becomes fuller and softer, and the system recovers from its apparent prostration, and a case of



ordinary inflammation will be developed infinitely more manageable than the state which had preceded it. The copious bleeding which has already been mentioned will not always suffice in gastritis. For in the course of the first or second day after the operation of phlebotomy, the symptoms will be very little or not at all alleviated. In such cases it will be necessary to repeat the operation and to the same extent as before. The small and frequently repeated bloodlettings recommended by some authors, are wholly inefficient to the cure of this disease. For there is scarcely any disease so apt to deceive the practitioner as this: owing to the few symptoms, which characterize ordinary inflammation being present. He is therefore frequently induced to confide in remedies infinitely less operative than venesection.



Next to bloodletting, blisters are the most important remedies, in the treatment of this disease. They should be large enough to cover the whole of the stomach, immediately over which, they should be applied: cooperating with the same design, fomentations to the abdomen are important remedies. The mode of applying them, is various; cloths wrung out of hot water, or spiritous liquors or bladders filled with hot water, will answer the purpose very well.

Such is the irritability of the stomach in this disease, that we are in a great measure precluded from the use of internal remedies; every thing taken into this organ being almost immediately rejected. It is however of great importance to open the bowels, and under such circumstances it will be necessary to resort to emollient injections;



and as these seem to operate chiefly by mechanical distention, they should consist of the mildest ingredients, and be thrown up the rectum in large quantities. They should also be frequently repeated, by which means they have the two fold effect of keeping the bowels in a soluble state, and acting as fomentations to the intestines.

As soon as the stomach will permit we should administer laxatives, or purges; and the articles generally resorted to, are castor oil or calomel, perhaps the latter article may have the preference, as it is more easily retained than the former. Epsom salts is also a valuable medicine in this disease, it being sometimes retained when all other articles are rejected.

It is an important indication in gastritis to calm the irritability of the stomach; and



for this purpose we should, in the early stages of the disease, give lime-water and milk or the effervescent draught; and should these fail, we should next resort to anodyne injections. The warm bath is also a useful remedy, but should not be used, until the violence of the inflammation be subdued by the necessary depleting remedies.

Demulcent drinks are recommended by most authors; but they seem to increase the irritability of the stomach, and we think should be sparingly used, particularly in the commencement of the attack. Even to allay thirst, very small portions of any liquid should be allowed. Toast-water answers this purpose very well.

When the symptoms of an approaching gangrene appear, Opium is principally to be relied on. Among the many other valuable



properties of this article, it possesses that of arresting a tendency to gangrene and mortification; but if Opium fail under these circumstances, we should resort to the spirits of turpentine, which is in this last stage of the disease, one of the most valuable of our remedies. —

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 of the country is engaged in
 agriculture, and of course the
 land is the basis of the
 wealth of the country, and is
 the basis of the power of the
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